

Unlike other categories, this award is determined from the results of a student survey rather than selection by judges.

The data collected for the next Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey, due to be published in spring 2018, showed Staffordshire University to have had the largest improvement in its overall score compared with the previous year (among institutions with at least 100 survey participants in each year).

The 2018 data are expected to confirm an improvement of about four percentage points in Staffordshire's score.

The survey, carried out by market research company YouthSight, asked more than 20,000 full-time undergraduates to evaluate their experience at university across 21 different measures. These 21 features of university life were all named by students as an important part of the university experience. They include course structure, lecture quality, social life, campus environment, industry connections and sports facilities.

In the survey results, satisfaction scores for each attribute are weighted to reflect how important these factors are in the student experience overall.

The judges said that Staffordshire's rapid rise up the rankings was impressive: "The university showed particular improvements on having high-quality staff and lecturers, a good students' union, excellent extracurricular and society activities and attractive accommodation."